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<p>Letter not sent. Oral briefing given to Sen Mc Govern by Mr. Munnery on 29 April.</p>			
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FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.			DATE

The Honorable George McGovern
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

My dear Senator McGovern:

This is in response to your letter of 13 April 1971 and to your oral request to Mr. John M. Maury, my Legislative Counsel, who met with you on 29 April 1971 regarding the matter raised in your letter.

The Central Intelligence Agency has never assisted, promoted or condoned the growth and use of heroin, or any other harmful drug. On the contrary, wherever possible, we have made every effort to discourage the growth of such drugs. In certain opium producing areas these efforts have had at least limited success. This Agency is keenly aware of the seriousness of the drug problem and in no circumstances has been or will be a knowing party to drug traffic.

This Agency is cooperating very closely with Government agencies concerned with this problem, and particularly with the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, in suppressing illicit drug traffic originating abroad. In regard to this problem, the role of this Agency has been primarily one of active support and we do not pretend an expertise in the problem, which is the responsibility of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs.

In Southeast Asia, opium has been grown for centuries and is an important cash crop of the producers. A significant factor in the opium problem has been the involvement of local officials in drug traffic. Most of it, however, is for local consumption and we are informed that only a very small portion of the heroin derived therefrom enters the United States.

I am confining my comments solely to those allegations involving this Agency and not to the broader international and policy aspects which are not within our limited sphere of responsibility.

I trust that this letter and your recent conversation with Mr. Maury are responsive to your inquiry. May I reaffirm that the Central Intelligence Agency shares your concern and, within our areas of responsibility, will continue to support and assist efforts to cope with this problem in every way possible.

Sincerely,

Richard Helms
Director

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OLC/JMM:jmd (30 Apr 71)